

Title: The impacts of neglecting the internally displaced people after the collapse of the state in Afghanistan

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Abstract

*Internally displaced people (IDPs) have not crossed a border to find safety they move from one area to another area of their country. Unlike refugees, they are on the run at home. IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of their government, the natural disasters and war are the main reasons for IDPs. Those who move from one area to another for running a business, or for sightseeing and are not forcedly displaced cannot be counted as internally displaced people (IDPs), but forcedly moved due to different reasons are called internally displaced people. Afghanistan is one of the countries with the largest internally displaced people, immigrants, and refugees in the world. In 2001 during the war in Afghanistan, when the number of internally displaced persons in the country stood at two million. However, in the same year, only 200,000 Afghans crossed into Pakistan as refugees and millions have gone to Iran, India, and other parts of the world. According to the international organization for migration (IOM), there are over five million internally displaced people in Afghanistan as of late 2021. Military actions and violence by the warring factions usually play a major part in the displacement, although political instability such as recent political development in mid-August 2021, natural disasters, climate change, drought, and poverty increase the number of internally displaced people, refugees, and migrants in this country. However, insecurity in a country has different external dimensions but internal dimensions, including cultural differences between ethnic groups, different languages, religions, and so on are the potential aspects of crimes and insecurity, but in Afghanistan, the issues of IDPs have a significant role in increscent of crises and insecurity. Specifically, the internally displaced people have exacerbated the crisis, crimes, and insecurity in Afghanistan. In this study, the focus is more on the internal dimension, namely the discussion of internally displaced people. Finding the causes of being IDPs and addressing these causes then responding to these gaps and marginalized members of the community with care and empathy. Emphasize the responsibility, relationships, and connection between IDPs and the host community. These issues should be resolved with compassion while building human relationships. This can decrease the number of IDPs in the country and as well as decrease the crimes, illness, and insecurity in the country. This study seeks to answer the main question: **What are the impacts of neglecting the internally displaced people after collapsing of the state in Afghanistan?** The provisional answer as a hypothesis is that **neglecting the internally displaced people in Afghanistan after collapse may cause insecurity, increscent drug cultivation, physical and mental illnesses, poverty, and different crimes. Address this issue through the care and protection of IDPs to decrease crimes and develop the economy of Afghanistan.** In this research, the library method has been applied, and the opinions of experts in this field through applying the qualitative method (conducting KIIs) have been used.*

Keywords: Impacts, collapse, internally displaced people, poverty, Afghan society

Introduction

The ethics of care and protection mainly focuses on responsibility communication and relationships between people. It is the same thing with care and protection of IDPs which allows us to consider the concerns and take care of the IDPs who are near to us. There are many and problems in society, and we cannot solve all these issues. The ethics of care allows spending energy on most argent and emergency human needs (Held, 2006). To concentrate on care and protection we should make things better, treat others fairly, consider the consequences of action and respect the rights of others (Mintz, 2016).

The main agencies that are responsible for providing protection can be states with international and national organizations that are able to offer protection that is effective and of a permanent nature (EASO, 2019, p. 32). In the situation where government protection is not ensured, the protection role falls to the international community. So, in terms of protection and care, it is important to know who the vulnerable people are, and then offer services and assistance to protect them. One of these vulnerable populations is internally displaced people.

Internally displaced people move from one area to another area to rescue their life due to different causes but do not cross the borders. The main causes are conflict, natural disasters, and insecurity. But those who move from one area to another area due to weather or due to economic development are not internally displaced people (Naem, 2022). The IDPs are forced to move their homes, they experience risks including loss of shelter, armed attacks, sexual abuses, gender-based violence, family separations, and displacement into inhospitable environments where they experience suffer, marginalization, harassment, and discrimination (Protection Cluster, 2010). Although, the number of IDPs is increasing day by day.

According to the global protection cluster, working group's handbook around 26 million individuals in more than 50 countries in the world are left their homes and moved to other areas of their own countries. These IDPs which are part of the civilian population need protection and assistance (Protection Cluster, 2010).

As reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, further IOM estimates show that close to one million Afghans have been displaced due to a variety of factors such as conflict but also unfavorable climate conditions after 15 August and were still displaced (IOM, 2022, p. 7).

In Afghanistan, most of the statistics are collected by UN agencies. IOM and UNCHCR cooperate in this regard. NRC also has field surveyors. These surveyors are in the field and try to find and recognize the IDPs for delivering services (Shafiyee, 2022).

The IDPs are vulnerable people in Afghanistan who needs emergency humanitarian assistance. But the finding shows that the IDPs do not receive humanitarian aid timely. Hence, the residents of Afghanistan suffer from poverty, but they treat very well with the IDPs in their communities and provide them with first aid kits to which they have access. Based on our chitchats with one of the employments with the ministry of refugees and returnees of Afghanistan, there are 49

registered IDPs' camps and 11 nonregistered camps in Kabul, and 200 camps in other provinces (Reza, 2022). Our interviews with the IDPs, authorities, and NGOs show a lack of delivering humanitarian assistance to IDPs which causes physical and mental illness, safety, and security issues, and even passing away.

In this study, desk research and qualitative method have been used. Not paying attention to the impact of neglecting the IDPs in society was the gap in the literature. The author conducted KII and in-depth interviews with the authorities, national and international NGOs, and IDPs in three (Kabul, Ghazni, and Bamiyan) provinces of Afghanistan. The main difficulty was the lack of literature and not sharing information by respondents to not face any problems.

The reasons for displacement in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a country that suffers from different challenges including conflict, natural disasters, and the recent collapse of the republic government which caused millions of Afghans to migrate abroad and be displaced internally within the country.

The considerable result of the conflict is the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. According to UNICEF, as of June 2020, close to 5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan left their homes and move to safe areas in big cities. Around 70 percent of IDPs were displaced to avoid the negative effects of armed conflict (UNICEF, 2021, p. 19).

Poverty and high vulnerability to natural disaster is the main cause of displacement in Afghanistan (UNICEF, 2021). This country is located in an active region and climate change causes floods, earthquakes, droughts, rainfall, and landslides, which exacerbates the vulnerability in Afghanistan (UNICEF, 2021). UNICEF state that, "Afghanistan's humanitarian and disaster risk profile as measured by the Inform Risk Index is at 8.1 – the second highest in the world after Somalia. Afghanistan is the tenth most vulnerable country to climate change and the eleventh least prepared country for climatic shocks. The combination of high climate risks, susceptibility to earthquakes, food insecurity, and poor preparedness have rendered Afghanistan the most at-risk country in the region (UNICEF, 2021)."

Besides written points and war in Afghanistan, different conflicts and unemployment increase the number of displacements in the country as one of the informants pointed out,

"There is always a conflict between the people on lands and water for irrigation; this is also a cause of IDPs. Another is poverty; those people who do not find a job then go to those provinces where they find the opportunity to work there. In some mountains where the people live is no work even for one day; then, they are forced to be IDPs to not die because of starvation. (Khostai, 2022)."

Forty years of conflict in the country, recent disasters, poverty, under-investment, unemployment, COVID-19 pandemic made the situation worst in Afghanistan. Prior to the political shift in August 2021, increased fighting across the country had already forced nearly

700,000 people into internal displacement, of which 80% are women and children. So, conflict and insecurity were the primary drivers of displacement and cross-border population movements in 2021 (IOM, 2022). The qualitative data shows same argument. As one of the informants added,

“The reason for our displacement was the war, our region was a place of war and conflict, and many war forces have moved to our place of residence, it was an absolute military situation, and we took our wife and children by the hand out of fear and left everything (our house) And we run away from there (Keshtmand, 2022).”

Among these drivers of conflict, IDMS added the ethnic tensions or human rights violations, as potential drivers of conflict in the country too (IDMS, 2008).

The livelihoods of IDPs

After August 2021 political changes and transition, more than 24 million of people are needed for humanitarian assistance (IOM, 2022, p. 4). Local crimes decreased access to work in different fields including agriculture which was affected by climate changes. Besides this, changes in the regime affected the economic sector and decreased the income of the population. The people lost their jobs and lost access to the market. (Nemat, Diwakar, Ghafoori, & Azadmanesh, 2022, p. 18) So, this makes life harder for the people specifically for the IDPs in the country. The living conditions of IDPs in Afghanistan are very bad. They face to lack of safe drinking water, lack of shelter, lack of access to clinics and hospitals (IDMS, 2008, p. 42). So, in this condition, the IDPs need emergency responses but the delivery of humanitarian aid to them by the government and by international NGOs is very slow and very less, as one of our informants stated,

“We haven't received any help from any charitable organization and government of Afghanistan, only the local people have provided us with some food, blankets, and other necessities, even though they are very poor. (Keshtmand, 2022)”

Hence, the economic condition of the people in host communities is not fair, and all people live in poverty, but they try to help and support the IDPs whether the IDPs are their relatives or belong to other ethnic and religious group. The host community tries to support and deliver services to their relatives and other people. If there are no houses to live in the community, then the IDPs select to live in public places such as parks or Masjids. One of our informants pointed out,

“My house was ruined due to a heavy flood. I went to my relative's home and their hospitality was very good. But some people have gone to a covered area where people perform the Fatiha ceremony (Mohammad, 2022).”

Another informant stated,

“The people of Yakavalang district have helped us a lot and provided carpets, kitchen utensils, and some food. People do whatever they can, some help us with flour, some bring oil and some rice, at the same time, the people of the community are very poor, but they try to help us so that we don't starve (Keshtmand, 2022).”

When the IDPs move from their homes in emergencies to rescue their life, they leave everything, because there is no time for them to take some stuff. Therefore, they are about to die due to hunger, hot or cold weather. If they do not receive humanitarian aid, they decide to sell their children or sell the organ of their bodies. One of the informants from an NGOs in Kabul added,

“There are families who want to sell a child to provide food for others. I have a family on my vulnerable family list who wanted to sell the third member of their family as this family already sold two members. The head of the family has brought the third child to the Masjid to sell her because of making food for other members. See and think how much the Afghan families are vulnerable and live in poverty that wants to sell the members of their families. The cases of selling the kidney and parts of the body are a lot. I know a person that has sold his kidney because of poverty instead of 150 thousand Afghani. We shared and reflected this issue on the international level in our interviews with international media.”

The maximum of the IDPs' families that we spoke about has only one or two low-quality food which is only a piece of bread with tea without sugar. We have families which don't have something to eat, therefore, they say to their children that the food is getting ready, they say this until their children fall asleep and then the parents go asleep with empty stomach. The IDPs cannot return to their real places because everything is ruined, and they don't have any place to leave. These IDPs need emergency assistance first and then move to the new shelter.

As poverty increases all over Afghanistan, when the residents of a community see that there are some charity programs and aid distribution for the IDPs, they also join the IDPs and seek to receive humanitarian aid.

The impacts of neglecting IDPs

There is a sense that almost all the Afghan population need humanitarian assistance, mainly emergency humanitarian assistance (Cornet, 2022). The maximum of the IDP families has only one or two low-quality foods in 24 hours which is only a piece of bread with tea without sugar. There are families which don't have something to eat including IDPs. The interviewee stated,

“Some families do not have any food to give to their children. When the children ask for food, their parents say to their children that the food is getting ready, they say this until their children fall asleep and then the parents go asleep on empty stomach. (Shafiyee, 2022)”

Some of the IDPs sell their children. Some others sell the organs of their bodies to provide food for the rest members of the families.

According to our qualitative data, due to the unavailability of clinics near IDPs' camps, the children and elders are infected with diseases. The children with some elders have lost their lives because of hot and cold weather (Azizi, 2022).

Overall, the IDPs mentally, and psychologically are not in good condition. In case of visiting them, stress and depression can be felt (Sherzad, 2022).

They IDPs really in need, their children ask for food but there is no food to feed them, when a person feel that his children are going to die because unavailability of food, then he does any crimes he can. Even they want to kill themselves or kill another person to make money and provide food. One of the respondents of an international NGO in Kabul pointed out that,

“If humanitarian aid does not increase, most people’s lives will be at risk. We are witnesses to the incident the person threw himself in front of the car to suicide. I am worried about their future. Most of them do not have access to food, which will cost child marriage. In Herat and other provinces, people sell their body parts to survive their families. Persons sell their kidneys to protect their families. Or maybe a person commits suicide. It happened several times, and they were not blamed or guilty (Khostai, 2022).”

Very less humanitarian aid for a short period is distributed to IDPs but overall, they are neglected, if the IDPs do not protect, they occur crimes such as robbery and violence will increase. There will be a distance between the government and the people. So, the illegal armed forces, and terrorists will use this as an opportunity and recruit them to their parties to use against the security of the country and the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Afghanistan is a country that has a huge number of IDPs more than other countries in the world. The people move to big cities and secure provinces. War and conflict are the main reason for IDPs, and the next reason is climate change and disasters. Based on observation from the field, the IDPs who are the victims of war and conflict do not receive as much humanitarian aid as the IDPs because receive as a result of natural disaster receive. The aid that IDPs receive is not sufficient. They only receive some food which finishes in a few days. The IDPs' lives are in danger, and they are not secure. Some evidence shows that the IDPs occurred crimes such as robberies to provide food for their children. They are easily recruited by illegal armed groups and abused by human smugglers. Those who never want to do crimes, sell their organs of bodies of themselves after that sell a child to provide food for the other members of the family. Some of the IDPs are addicted to drugs. This has a bad effect on society These are the gaps that are not mentioned in the literature on Afghanistan's IDPs. The host communities try to help and assist as much as they can without consideration of the ethnic, and religious distinctions. The host communities try to provide a room in their houses for their relatives if they are among IDPs and provide first aid to the rest. But the humanitarian assistance delivery by the government and humanitarian organizations is not remarkable enough. If they assistance by humanitarian

organizations do not increase the government does not protect and care of them, they may use by terrorists and insecurity, robbery and other crimes may increase and there will be no way for development of the country.

The objective of the research is to find out the negative impact of neglecting IDPs which the study somehow reached the objective and proved the hypothesis.

This study recommends life protection of the IDPs by providing security in the area by the state. The humanitarian organization should increase providing aid and basic necessities. Protection of economic, social, and civil rights should be considered.

More humanitarian aid services and projects should be allocated for IDPs in Afghanistan. UN agencies say that there is 95 percent poverty in Afghanistan. So, they should respond to the need to remove or decrease poverty. Employment and job creation should be increased through the implementation of development projects. Providing facilities in the camps should be in priority. After providing emergency responses, the focus should be on the resettlement of IDPs with facilities. Few research has been conducted on IDPs in Afghanistan. This study highly recommends conducting more research.

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